

PREPARING TO TAKE THE GED® TESTS

THE OFFICIAL GED PRACTICE TESTS

The Official GED Practice Tests (OPT) is a mini version of the GED Tests. The OPT is half the length and half the number of questions as the GED Tests, but covers the same content.

The OPT questions are selected from the same bank of questions GED Testing Service® (GEDTS) considers for the GED Tests. These questions follow the same content and format as the questions on the actual tests. For example, 25 percent of the questions on the GED Mathematics test cover measurement and geometry and 25 percent of the Mathematics OPT test covers measurement and geometry.

The OPT is used as the test readiness indicator in Kentucky. The OPT must be administered according to the vendor guidelines and in a proctored setting. The adult education provider signs the KYAE-6 GED Testing Application Form when the test-taker is ready to take and pass the GED Tests based on the provider's experience. The minimum requirement to sign the KYAE-6 is passing the OPT. However, professional expertise may indicate higher scores are needed on the OPT to ensure passing the GED Tests.

Retesting and the OPT

Just as the test-taker is required to be certified as test ready to first take the GED Tests, the test-taker must also be certified to retest. This requires achieving improved scores on the OPT on any subject not initially passed on the GED Tests. If the test-taker is retesting on the GED Tests to achieve the necessary overall average, the adult education provider may use discretion in suggesting which tests should be retaken on the OPT and the GED Tests.

The GED Tests may be taken three times in one calendar year. Using the OPT as a readiness factor protects the test-taker from testing three times without passing. The OPT should not be administered more than three times in one calendar year. The OPT should be used as a test readiness indicator and not as a practice exam.

OPT TESTING FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

These special populations will not be and are not required to be enrolled in your program before OPT testing.

State Agency Children

State agency children are the responsibility of the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Community Based Services and the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services. Educational services are provided to state agency children through school districts. State agency children must meet all Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) eligibility requirements except withdrawal from school. State agency children are provided an exemption to take the GED Tests although still enrolled in school.

KYAE-funded programs are asked to administer the Official GED Practice Tests (OPT) to state agency children without expending additional resources. Please test these test-takers at the same time you administer the OPT to your test-takers. Agencies serving state agency children should let you know when they are sending them for OPT testing.

When signing the KYAE-6 form in the OPT section, please enter the **instructional program code 66 + county code + 6**, not the program's OPT code (22 + county + code). This allows statistical tracking of volume and assigns performance to the original instructional program, the school district. If a state agency child has taken the OPT, mark that category on the top of page 2 of the KYAE-6 form. The agency is responsible for any additional signatures necessary on the KYAE-6 form prior to testing.

If there is a question about whether a program in your community is serving state agency children and your program can administer the OPT, please contact B. J. Helton at bj.helton@ky.gov.

GED Secondary Program Test-Takers

Test-takers enrolled in a school district's Kentucky Department of Education approved GED Secondary Program may also be administered the OPT by the local adult education program in the same manner as state agency children. These test-takers are still enrolled in school and have an exemption to take GED Tests in the eligibility regulation. The school district should contact the local adult education program before sending a test-taker to take the OPT and confirm them as in the GED Secondary Program. These test-takers must achieve scores of 430 on each subtest and an average of 480 on all tests before you sign the KYAE-6 form.

When signing the KYAE-6 form in the OPT section, please enter the **instructional program code 44 + county code + 4**, not the program's OPT code (22 + county + code). This allows statistical tracking of volume and assigns performance to the original instructional program, the school district. If a GED Secondary Program test-taker has taken the OPT, mark that category on the top of page 2 of the KYAE-6 form. The district is responsible for any additional signatures on the KYAE-6 form and for signing the Option Form. If you have concerns about whether the school district is approved to offer the GED Secondary Program, please contact B. J. Helton at bj.helton@ky.gov.

KET Test-Takers

KET test-takers may present a voucher to take the GED Tests initially without an adult education provider signing the KYAE-6 form. If the KET test-taker does not pass the GED Tests, adult education programs will administer the OPT to these test-takers on the GED content area test they did not pass. Since KET test-takers do not have original OPT scores, the OPT score must be higher than the failing GED score, but must at least achieve the 410 minimum and overall 450 average before you sign the KYAE-6 form for retesting.

When signing the KYAE-6 form in the OPT section, please enter the **instructional program code 88 + county code + 8**, not the program's OPT code (22 + county + code). This allows statistical tracking of volume and assigns performance to the instructional program, KET.

If you are administering the OPT to any of these test-takers, have the test-taker or agency copy the second page of the KYAE-6 form just as you do for your test-takers. The test-taker will need this form for retesting on the GED Tests with new and improved scores entered below the original scores.

TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES FOR THE GED

General Tips

The scores on the GED Tests are based only on the number of questions answered correctly. If a test-taker does not know the answer to a question, they should mark the answer that appears to be the best of the five choices. A test-taker should not spend too much time on a question whose answer they do not know; they should answer it if they can and go on to the next question. It is to the test-taker's advantage to answer every question.

If two answers are marked for a question, the test-taker will receive no credit for that question. Only one response can be marked for each question. There is only one correct answer for each question.

A black pen is used to mark responses on the answer sheet. The test-taker should make sure that the marks on the answer sheet are dark and that the circles are completely filled. Make no stray marks on the answer sheet booklet. Make sure that every circle marked on the answer sheet booklet corresponds to the number of the question and to the test-taker's answer choice. If the test-taker needs to change an answer, the mark should be covered completely by using the White-Out pen provided.

Information for Testing Within the Time Limits

The time limits are sufficient to permit at least 90 percent of the GED test-takers to complete the tests while working at a comfortable rate. The use of uniform time limits permits GEDTS to ensure that each test-taker is given the same opportunity to demonstrate educational achievements.

The examiner should note the beginning time for each test and when the test should be completed. The examiner should post this information at the start of each test.

Test-takers sometimes encounter problems with the time limit on the Social Studies test. The Social Studies test and the Science test have the same number of questions (50 each) but the time limit for the Social Studies test (70 min.) is ten minutes less than for Science (80 min.).

Information for the Mathematics Test

The Mathematics test is two parts. A calculator is provided by the test center and may be used on Part 1 of the Mathematics test (25 questions). The calculator is not permitted on Part 2 (25 questions). Most of the questions (80 percent) on the Mathematics test are multiple-choice format; 20 percent of the questions must be answered on an alternate format grid. All the correct answers fit the alternate format grid. If a test-taker has an answer that does not fit, they should read the question again to make sure they have given the answer in the form requested. Mixed numbers, such as $3\frac{1}{2}$, cannot be entered in the alternate format grid. Instead, represent them as decimal numbers (3.5) or fractions ($\frac{7}{2}$). No answer can be a negative number. Answers can begin in any column that will allow the answer to be entered, but do not leave a blank space in the middle of an answer.

A common mistake is to mark more than one answer on the alternate format grid. Test-takers should mark only the circle that represents their answer. If more than one answer is given, the test-taker will receive no credit for the answer.

Formulas are provided in the Mathematics test booklet. Only some of the questions require the use of a formula. Not all formulas given will be needed.

Information for the Essay

The essay must be written on the topic assigned at the examination session. The test-taker reads the assigned essay topic before beginning the writing skills test. The topics are assigned randomly.

In rare cases, an exemption may be granted to an assigned topic because the topic is inappropriate due to a test-taker's disability, religion or incarceration. Exemptions are not allowed because a test-taker does not understand the topic or does not have an opinion about the subject. A test-taker who thinks they should be granted an exemption for one of these reasons should notify the examiner at the test session after reading their assigned topic. All exemptions to the assigned topic must be filed with GEDTS in Washington and with the State GED Administrator in Frankfort.

If a test-taker writes an essay on a topic other than the one assigned, the essay will not be scored. The test-taker will receive a score of zero and will have to take both parts of the writing test again. It will be noted on the score report that the essay was off-topic.

If a test-taker writes an inadequate essay, the test-taker will receive a score of zero and will have to take both parts of the writing skills test again. It will be noted on the score report that the topic was inadequate.

The essay on the writing skills test must be written in a black ballpoint pen that is provided by the examiner. The essay written during the GED examination is considered draft writing. It is expected that the test-taker will have to cross-out words to make corrections. It does not matter if a test-taker uses print or cursive writing. While test-takers should write as clearly as possible, handwriting and neatness do not affect the essay score.

The test-taker is given a sheet of lined scratch paper to use during the writing skills test. This sheet of scratch paper will not be scored; it will be collected with all other test materials at the end of the test and shredded. The essay must be written in black ballpoint ink on pages 2 and 3 of the Language Arts, Writing test answer

sheet during the two-hour time period of the examination. Only the writing on pages 2 and 3 will be scored. All test-takers must write their essays on the answer sheets and may not attach additional paper or use a second answer sheet if the essay exceeds the space provided. Only the writing on the two lined pages in the answer sheet booklet will be read and scored.

GED Testing Service in Washington prohibits discussing or publicizing the topic or content of any essay with anyone, including instructors, program directors, examiners or other test-takers. The essay must be treated as confidential material.

The essay topics are just like questions and it is considered testing misconduct to disclose the essay topic with anyone including the test-taker's adult education instructor.

